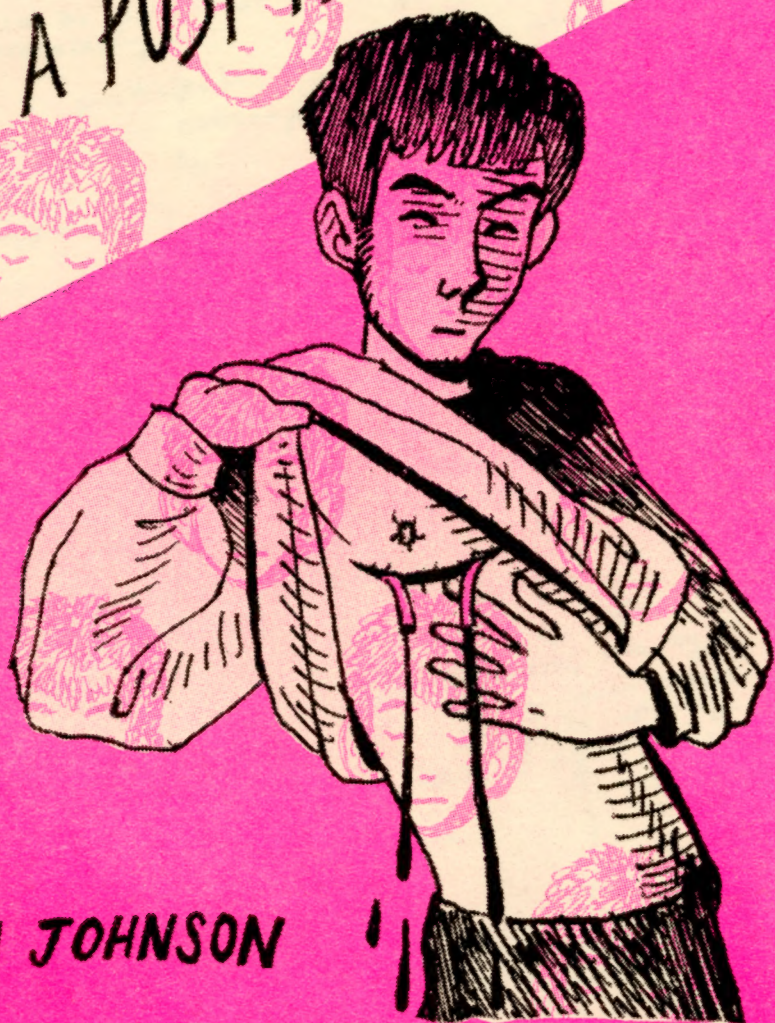


DIARY OF A POST-TRANSEXUAL



ARI JOHNSON

CONFESSIONAL POET? OR EMOTIONAL
SLUT?! READ WITHIN AND
DECIDE FOR YOURSELF

Journal
excerpts from

Fall 2021 - Spring 2022

~~I made~~
Inside it all
feels so
counterintuitive.

↓
When I'm quiet I
feel trapped inside.
I'm removed from the
world bc I'm not
participating.

When I participate I
feel like I'm overcom-
pensing. I still feel
~~stuck~~ stuck in my head.

I want to feel present
with others →

so I should stop
worrying about what
they think.

I'm so used to always
guessing what everyone
else thinks.

←
Actually progress feels
like ~~forgetting~~ - it feels
like ~~forgetting~~ understanding a
tight fist.
Like it you're anxious something
The answer is just - don't
be.
↑ let it go.

I am also growing
more and more aware
of its selfishness.
but it traps me still.
less than it used to.
but still.

↑
I just don't know
how to live any
other way
my self hatred is like
a black hole that
distorts ~~it~~
whatever approaches
it

↑
I can feel
joys passing me by
as I turn them
away bc of my
beliefs about my
self.

→
I hate it when I ask
why and there
is no answer.



I'm stuck with
a sense that
maybe after a lifetime
of servitude to others I'll
earn rest and self love.
If only it worked that
way.



being there
for others is
one thing -
letting them
be there for
you is
another



OH GOD!
I'M
TRULY
A
COWARD!

organic shapes - less anatomical more
gestural
- screentone bc/ no color



TODAY

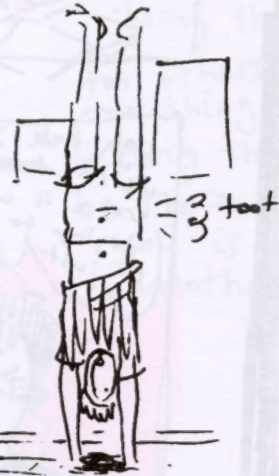




preg
centipede

gesture ~~in comics~~

↳ the way that
gesture connects to
the emotion & impact
of comic



Milton CANIFF

TIME IN COMICS
VS.
TIME IN VIDEO

Here

Richard
McEvine

The underground
& alternative
comic archive
SVA login

↳ The Comics
Journal

dreamland
Japan - book

STRAND: - ~~Zami: A new spelling of my name~~
Audre Lorde

- Susan Sontag - Illness as metaphor
and AIDS and its
metaphor

2/14/22

Accept
feelings
even ones
you don't
wanna
act on -
let em be



It's like - by reading La
sullivan's writing - I
could place myself in
his shoes - and in
that act, shatter the
insecurities, fears, shame
that kept me
trapped in believing that
the life I want could
never be attainable to me -
suddenly I can love in
new ways - knowing how he
loved.



lean on
each other

I see a boy online I know from a while ago - he's a drag queen

he poses shirtless with a beard and I find I could say, there's a boy I

find beautiful →

much of that having to do w/ the fact that we knew each other briefly

in that time he was such a sweet heart

a kind person, or at least, easy to talk and laugh with

2/16/22
maybe my stomach hurts bc I'm reading the last chapter of Lou Sullivan's diaries* - which is making my heart hurt so much

wondering if they're actually cramps → feeling anxious/sad because of it → desiring a place to belong + feel loved

smthg about identity politics its like we're still trying to fit into ~~smthg~~
smthg pre existing - like all the micro labels to fit into this binary world

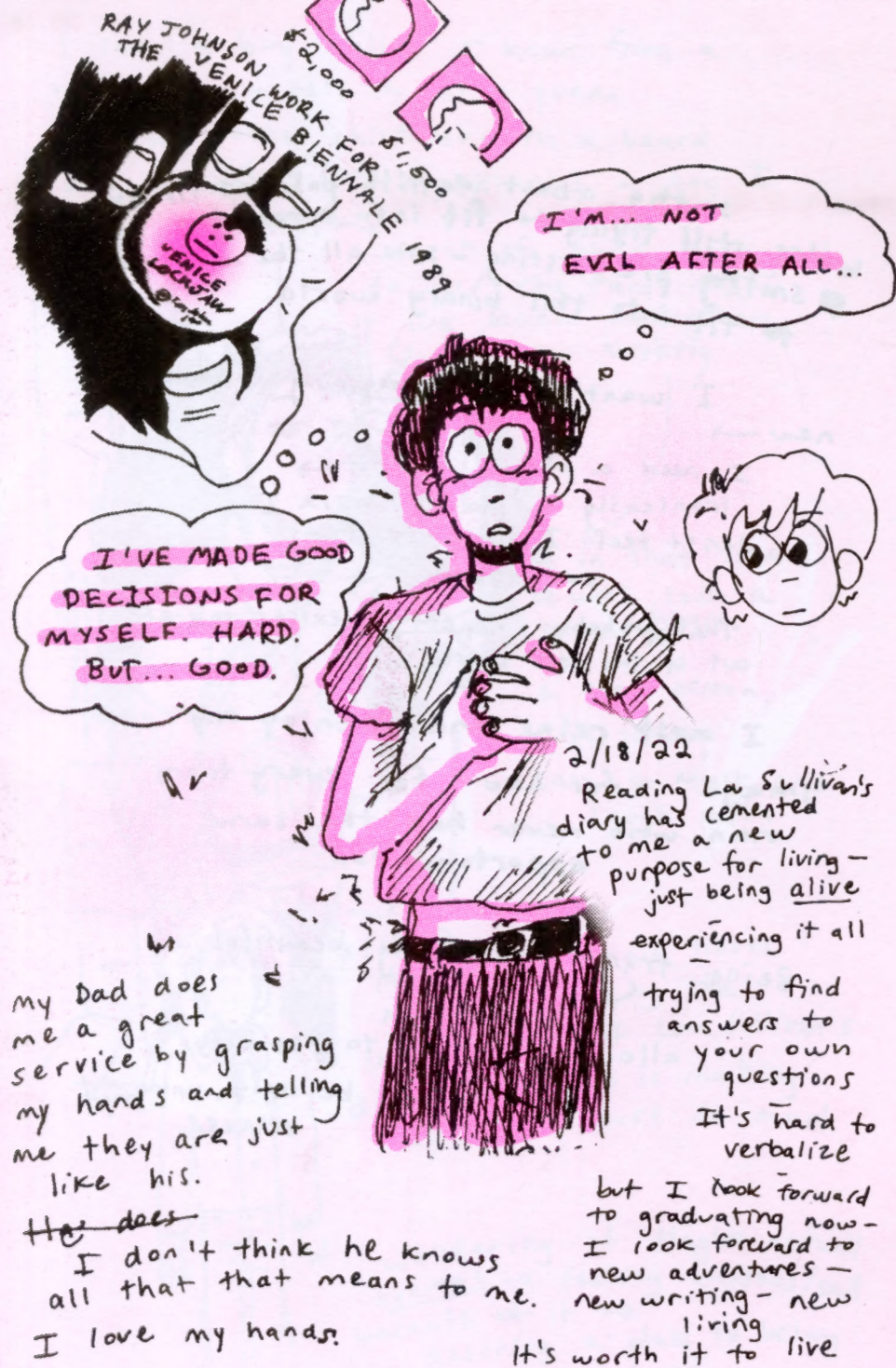
I want more reimagining - something new →

I need a place to fit →
ironically a place where I don't feel I have to fit so rigidly

that probably - hopefully - exists more out in the real world

I must relax and "enjoy my image" - for Lou - for every trans man who never had the same opportunities

Being trans and being beautiful
↳ the power in allowing yourself to get ugly/
be ugly, unkempt relaxed

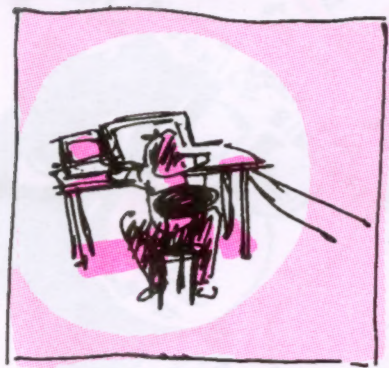


ANDREA
Feldman
1948-1972
PLUNGED TO HER DEATH

"I AM UNIQUE AS AN ANTIQUE."
WHICH SHE WAS

"NO ONE TAKES ME SERIOUSLY
BECAUSE THEY THINK OF
ME AS A JOKE."

BUT ANDREA WAS LOVED,
AND YOU COULD SEE THIS
BY THE SHOCKED EXPRESSIONS
ON THE FACES OF
HER FRIENDS...



~~STEP 5~~
~~STEP 5~~
 STEP 5: Be as
 cringe as u want

make autobio w/out
 remorse

where does that
 urge to act "self
 aware" + begrudgingly
 vulnerable even
 come from lol



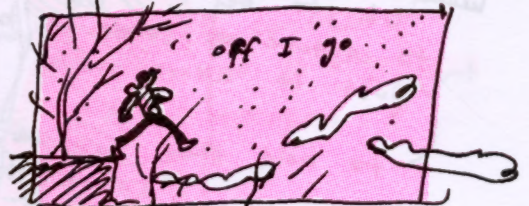
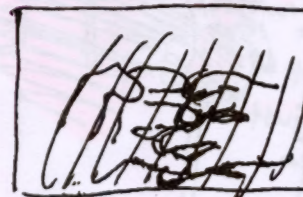
HOW TO MOVE FORWARD
 AND START TO LIVE
 AGAIN:

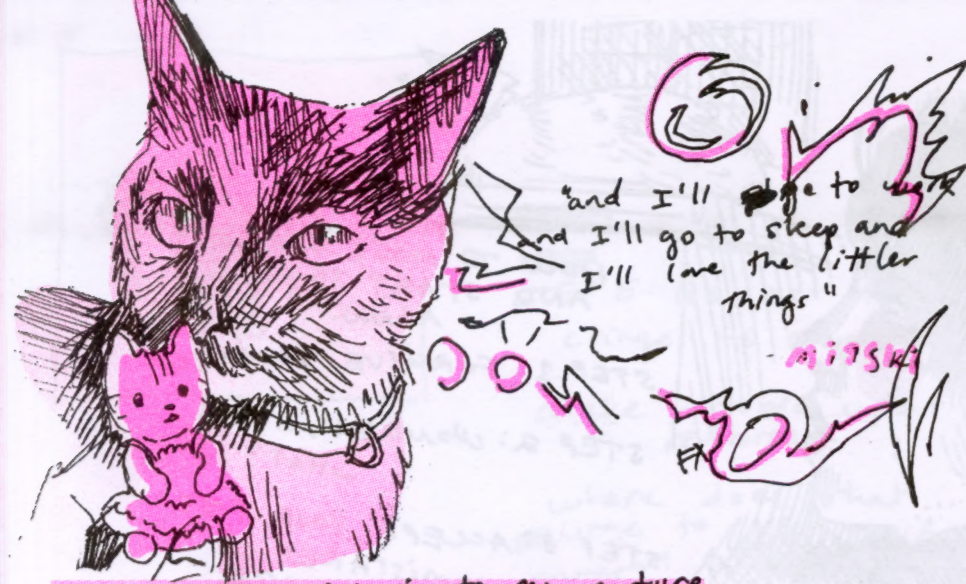
STEP 1: FORGIVE YOURSELF

STEP 2: WONDER... FOR
 WHAT?

STEP 3: ACCEPT YOUR PAST
 MISTAKES
 BUT EMPATHIZE
 WITH YOURSELF

STEP 4: YOU'RE NOT
 EVIL





and I'll ~~go to work~~
and I'll go to sleep and
I'll love the little
things"

MISS

I want to give in to my nature

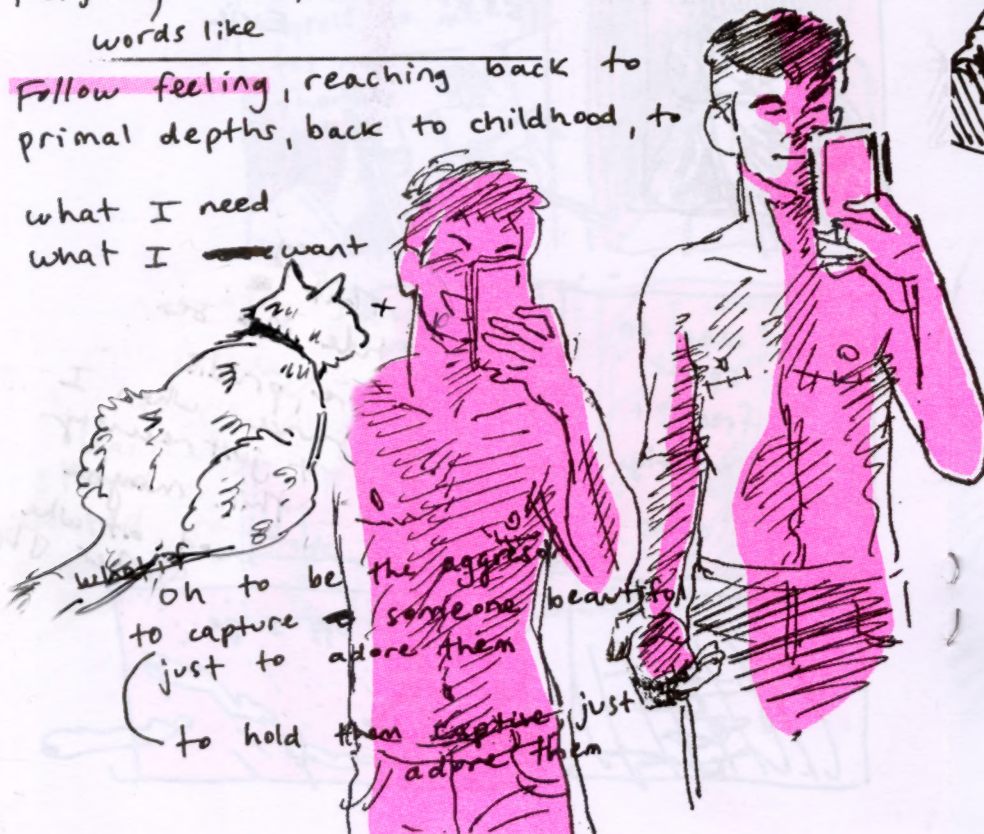
Follow all that compels me

Forget ~~a~~ health, ~~and~~ progress, objective, fact
words like

Follow feeling, reaching back to
primal depths, back to childhood, to

what I need

what I ~~want~~



oh to be the aggressor
to capture someone beautiful
just to adore them
to hold them captive, just
to adore them

I wonder what ^{he} they thinks

He's so serious and lovely
so sweet and sad

Do you feel ~~lets a butterfly to~~
~~be pinned~~ you've pinned a butterfly

You thank your lucky stars
you found one

No - that it flew so
readily into your hands

Can rabbits
become wolves?

of course
no one is
purely any ~~thing~~
one thing.



to be loved by a gay man
to be flirted w/ even
makes me feel so real

Take my words out of context -
I want to be free of it - I want
to be nothing to you

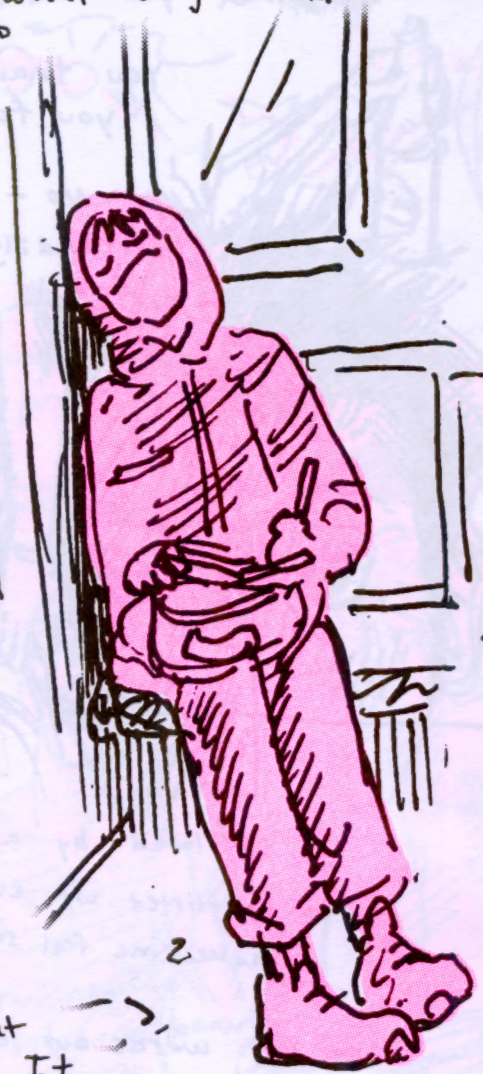
I feel so life-affirmed by this new
crush - the idea of being in a gay
relationship with another trans man
is almost too much. It feels so beautiful
to me. It all feels like a magical occurrence -
almost impossible. What a gift and
what a journey to

get there, and how
lucky am I to
be able to live
that, and be
who I am.

He asked me
about a girl
group he likes
and I didn't
know their
names.

He was shocked and
offended so I told
him I'd listen and
learn. How fun
and gay is that! (lol)

I feel like I could
really be seen and
understood as my
faggy self - and that
idea is electrifying. It
gives me life.



I WANT TO CAPTURE YOU
JUST TO ADMIRE YOU

KEEP YOU, TO ADORE

I WANT TO BE THE AGGRESSOR

BE THE DOG THAT ATTACKS
NOT THE ONE THAT ROLLS OVER
I'M TOO ACCUSTOMED TO BARING
MY STOMACH

AND LOOKING OUT FROM DOE EYES

LOOK UPON YOUR PREY
AS IT DEVOURS YOU

REVEL IN ITS SWEETNESS
~~IT'S SWEETNESS~~

THE KINDNESS IN PIERCED SKIN



22



I'm thankful
to be healthy
and alive.

I don't take
that for
granted.

I'm proud to
be alive and
thriving.

Even if I'm
stressed as hell
and learning to
be a person
still hah.

3-25-22

1am

my plan was
basically to
ignore my birthday
but I spent today
(the 24th) feeling
so anxious and
scattered.

I think maybe
I need to
slow down
and pause.

A birthday is
something to be
celebrated!

I'm 22 years
old! I get to
listen to that
Taylor Swift
song now!

I want to
sleep well and
wake up in a
better mood tomorrow.

It'll all be ok, I can do this.
I'm ok. I'm good.

stars in our eyes, alcohol, light,
punching, wrestling, ~~slamming~~ slamming fists
on the table, flicking my wrist,
flexing my arm



- Ease
- Unencumbered
- want the world to be rough with me
- kid gloves off

I want my clothes to drape
over me.

bc I'm too flat everywhere to fill
them.

I want to dress simply, rise easily,
waste no time getting out the door

I want the world to ~~be~~
~~be~~ be coarse with me ~~in passing~~

hit me across the face and feel my
roughness in return

disregard me.

let me pass without even a ~~whisper~~
whisper

04/07/22

I love my flat chest - but I'm rarely consciously aware of it, unless I'm looking in the mirror or sleeping shirtless.

But today I stretched back on a chair in the library and felt the fabric of my shirt on my skin - and I was really

happy it felt the way it did.



⑧ - I'm so pissed off. I'm always so pissed off. Lately I've been waking up every day on the brink of a heart event bc of how out of control it all is. How vilified we are for wanting to exist in peace.

I wish I could make you understand why... I'm so angry. why... it feels like you spit in my face every time you say these things. I bark bc I'm scared. Ultimately, I'm fucking lonely and terrified. And I don't know if I could relate to you the feeling of being a child and having the sudden realization that the adults you loved your whole life are alien to you. Because they hate you and they don't even know it. They don't want you to exist and they don't even know it. They don't know who you are.

⑨ - you want to maintain your proximity to me bc I provide you with a certain cultural capital. you think you're hip because you have gay and trans "friends", who you'll gladly cite on facebook when you tell everyone to vote Red.

Don't compliment me and in the same breath not-so-subtly tell me to come to God.
Fuck you!!!

I dare you, stoke the flames of this fire - my enormous trans ego.

And enjoy your 4th of July barbecues while you repost statistics abt increased risks of heart disease in trans men on testosterone - as if you don't gladly fuck up your own health for more trivial things.

Trust that I've been careful not to develop bad habits, because I am determined to stay alive for a LONGGG TIME - I will outlive you and that's a promise.

Advanced cross dresser DYKE/FAG
BUTCH/TWINK

If there's one thing I've learned it's that I've gotta let myself say what I wanna say. It's the only way I can move forward. so here's my anger.

I don't coddle anyone I love because it's not my job and I don't have time. Whatever you've done to overcome your bigotry needs to be done faster. Done yesterday. I can't force anything - only plant seeds by living. Eventually you'll realize that I never looked down on you like you might think I do - like I fear. You'll realize I'm pissed for good reason.

When you're ready to meet me - where I'm at I'll meet you gladly - but I don't settle for anyone. I know sometimes it seems I'm needlessly contentious or inflammatory. maybe that's true. But I'll focus on my work, and you focus on yours.

In 2020, I had a ~~big~~ family crisis that sent me over the edge -
It was the first time I really cried after going on T. I was struck by realization.



It's an apt representation of what transition has meant to me. Even on dark days I am full of a sense of joy and ~~wholeness~~ wholeness. I am overwhelmed with ~~thankfulness~~ thankfulness - that I get to experience the pain and joy of life as this person.

To feel your gaze rest upon me
And be comforted
Like snow on downcast eyelashes

To feel the weight, when ~~my~~ eyes dart
between you and trembling hands

I look at my legs now and struggle
to remember
A time when my body was not sheltered
By thick hair
I part the strands to see alien skin

So far from its past
Grazed by knife's edge

I cut my chin now
Trying to sew roughness

To feel how soft the world is
Against new landscape

One day this novelty will fade
And I'll feel gentle again

Acknowledgements:

Throughout the time I was working on this journal I was greatly impacted by "*We Both Laughed in Pleasure, The Selected Diaries of Lou Sullivan 1961-1991*." Edited by Ellis Martin and Zach Ozma. Lou Sullivan was a prominent trans activist, who advocated for gay trans men who were gatekept from medical transition, because most doctors who prescribed hormones and performed surgeries at the time did not believe that you could be trans and gay.

On page six I refer to the last chapter of his diaries, which he wrote before passing from AIDS-related complications on March 2, 1991. Throughout his battle with the disease he said, "I took a certain pleasure in informing the gender clinic that even though their program told me I could not live as a gay man, it looks like I'm going to die like one."

The book came to me when I really needed it. Although truthfully, I don't know if there will ever be a time in my life where I don't. I'll treasure my copy forever.

The "Andrea Feldman" page is directly sourced from the work of Ray Johnson. After his death in 1995, friends of Johnson found a green box in his home, full of collages which referenced the suicide of the Andy Warhol superstar. It is believed that his own death was a carefully planned suicide, after his body was found in Sag Harbor in Long Island.

The title of this zine is in partial reference to *Journal of a Transsexual* by Leslie Feinberg. It's a small collection of hir early writing, and a record of hir daily life post-hrt in New York City. It served as an important point of reference for me when I did a lot of writing early in my own transition. So, I wanted to call back to it here.

(I was lucky to have a teacher send it to me since it can be hard to find - so pls feel free to email me if you want the PDF! - arjohnsonart@gmail.com - The more widely we distribute these things the greater chance we have of preserving them so please don't hesitate)

"*Diary of a Post-Transsexual*" is also a reference to *The Empire Strikes Back*, by Sandy Stone. After a long period of personal growth, reading her work felt like a culmination of many questions that had been tossing around in my brain. In medical transition I found some parts of myself, and lost others. Stone articulated what I had lost. My connection to the intertextuality of my life. Now, I hope to become "post-transsexual", as she described.

I hope we are all are liberated one day to be, and to become, exactly who we are.

Thanks for reading!



